

Message Text

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72

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /045 W

----- 123364

R 210435Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 184

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 4554

THE FOLLOWING MSG SENT ACTION ISLAMABAD AND INFO KARACHI

DATED 20 MAY 75 IS H/W REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION:

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 0568

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EAID, PK

SUBJECT: WHEAT PROCUREMENT IN PUNJAB

ALSO FOR USAID

REF: A. WHEELER FT NO. 169 DATED APRIL 23

B. GRIFFIN LI 14 DATED APRIL 28

1. WE HAVE MADE SEVERAL FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO PIN DOWN PUNJAB GOVERNMENT ON QUESTION OF FORCED PROCUREMENT, TO NO AVAIL. FOOD MINISTER DARISHAK HAS REMAINED UNAVAILABLE DESPITE PERSISTENT ATTEMPTS ON OUR PART TO REACH HIM. (WE CAUGHT HIM OFF BASE MAY 15 WHEN HIS STAFF SAID HE WAS OUT OF TOWN. NEXT DAY WE POINTED OUT TO HIS STAFF PRESS ARTICLE INDICATING HE WAS HERE; THEY THEN GAVE US CONFUSED STORY AMOUNTING TO "HE IS TOO BUSY.") BY NOW EMBASSY AND USAID WILL HAVE HEARD RESULTS OF AUCHTER'S CONVERSATION WITH PLANNING COMMISSIONER IMTIAZI, WHO ESSENTIALLY ADMITTED THAT PUNJAB GOVERNMENT

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IS FORCING PROCUREMENT BECAUSE OF STRONG THREATY FROM

HIGH GOP OFFICIALS.

2. CONGEN LOCAL FINALLY MANAGED TO REACH FOOD SECRETARY CHAUDHARY MOHAMMAD AKRAM FOR US MAY 16, AND WHEN TOLD THAT ONE PROABLE SUBJECT WE WISHED TO DISCUSS WAS FOOD PROCUREMENT, HE DECLARED THAT IT WAS "CONFIDENTIAL MATTER" WHICH COULD NOT BE DISCUSSED BY HIM WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES. HE ADVISED US TO HAVE EMBASSY TAKE UP MATTER WITH GOP OFFICIALS IN ISLAMABAD.

3. DURING CHANCE ENCOUNTER AT LUNCHEON MAY 16, DPO DISCUSSED FOOD PROCUREMENT WITH FORMER PUNJAB AGRICULTURE MINISTER KARDAR (HE IS STILL PPP MPA). DPO TOLD KARDAR HE COULD NOT RECONCILE OFFICIAL GOPUNJAB PRONOUNCEMENTS THAT PROCUREMENT WOULD BE MADE "ABSOLUTELY ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS" WITH RECENT PRESS REPORTS (POUCHED TO EMBASSY) THAT GOVERNMENT HAS "DECIDED TO DISCOURAGE TOTALLY THE PURCHASE OF WHEAT BY A PRIVATE DEALER FROM ANYONE IN PUNJAB." KARDAR SAID HIS LAST NOTE TO CHIEF MINISTER BEFORE RESIGNING FROM THE CABINET LAST YEAR WAS PRECISELY ON THAT SUBJECT, POINTING OUT POTENTIALLY GRAVE CONSEQUENCES OF FORCED PROCUREMENT.

4. KARDAR WENT ON TO REVEAL THAT HE RECENTLY SENT ANOTHER NOTE TO GOVERNMENT (HE WILL NOT BE ATTENDING PUNJAB ASSEMBLY BUDGET SAKION IN JUNE) REITERATING HIS STRONG FEELING THAT FORCED PROCUREMENT THIS YEAR WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD ARGUMENT THAT DECISIONS ON THIS MATTER WERE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOP, BUT ASSERTED HE HAD COUNTER-ARGUED THAT UNDER CONSTITUTION, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS HAD POWER TO CONTROL TRANSFER OF FOOD GRAIN. HE SAID POLICY OF "DENUDING" CERTAIN DISTRICTS OF PUNJAB TO PROVIDE FOR CITIES AND OTHER AREAS, INCLUDING THOSE OUTSIDE PROVINCE, WAS "FOLLY." HE ADVISED DPO THAT "REGARDLESS OF WHAT THEY SAY, WHAT THEY ARE DOING AMOUNTS TO FORCED PROCUREMENT."

5. COMMENT: EVASIVENESS OF OFFICIALS, INCONSISTENCIES OF STATEMENTS TO PRESS AND KARDAR'S INSIGHTS ALL LEAD US TO UNHAPPY CONCLUSION THAT GOPUNJAB IS IN FACT TAKING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEASURES AT THIS TIME WHICH AMOUNT TO FORCED PROCUREMENT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PASS ALONG USAID VIEWS VIEWS TO KEY GOPUNJAB OFFICIALS WHENEVER WE CAN, BUT IN MEANTIME IT BEGINS TO APPEAR THAT APPROACHES TO GOP IN ISLAMABAD ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

6. LATE NOTE: AFTER FOREGOING DRAFTED, DPO ENCOUNTERED PUNJAB AGRICULTURE MINISTER KHAKWANI AT SOCIAL FUNCTION

MAY 17 AND TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER MILD COMPLAINT
ABOUT INACCESSIBILITY OF DARISHAK AND TO URGE GOPUNJAB TO
CAREFULLY CONSIDER POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF ANY FORCED PROCUREMENT
PLANS IT MIGHT HAVE. AFTER MAKING PRO-FORMA OBSERVATION THAT
HE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PROCUREMENT, KHAKWANI READILY AGREED
THAT ANY APPEARANCE OF FORCE IN PROCUREMENT PROCESS COULD
DAMAGE NEXT YEAR'S PLANTING PROSPECTS, AND OFFERED TO PASS
ALONG OUR REMARKS TO "THE RIGHT PEOPLE."
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